

Fact Sheet: Testing of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Technology at Land Borders

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is testing the US-VISIT Program's next phase of implementation, which uses radio frequency identification (RFID) technology to more efficiently record the entries and exits of visitors issued Forms I-94 at our land borders. Five U.S. land border ports will test the RFID technology from August 4, 2005, through early summer of 2006. The ports are Nogales East (Deconcini) and Nogales West (Mariposa) in Arizona; Alexandria Bay (Thousand Islands) in New York; and Pacific Highway and Peace Arch in Washington state.

The five test locations were chosen to thoroughly evaluate the capability of this technology in a variety of weather and traffic conditions as US-VISIT will only deploy a fully tested system.

What Travelers Can Expect During the Initial Phase of RFID Testing

At the test port locations, travelers who receive Forms I-94 or I-94W, arrival/departure records, will continue to go to the secondary inspection area for processing. These travelers will be issued an RFID-enabled Form I-94A containing a passive RFID "tag."

Each traveler will also be provided an informational pamphlet about the test. The pamphlet includes suggestions to ensure that his or her RFID-enabled Form I-94A is in the best position to be electronically read by readers located at entry and exit points at the port.

These suggestions were developed to ensure traveler safety while allowing travelers to continue to enter and exit the United States at current speeds with no additional stops.

Form I-94A Sample

| | | |
|--|--------------------------|------------|
| Departure Number | 000357902 46 | |
| Department of Homeland Security | B1 | 1231231323 |
| CBP I-94 A (11-04) Departure Record | Sep 16 2005 | |
| Family Name | SMITH | |
| First (Given) Name | Birth Date (Day, Mo, Yr) | |
| JOHN | 06, 05, 76 | |
| Country of Citizenship | COUNTRY | |
| 20050817 US-VISIT 20050617 MULTIPLE | | |
| See Other Side | STAPLE HERE | |



DRIVERS

Before starting your car, place your own Form I-94 on the dashboard or on the seat next to you.



PASSENGERS

Lift your own Form I-94 to a window when you enter or exit the port.



PEDESTRIANS

Take your own Form I-94 out of your pocket or purse as you enter or exit the port.

The technology being tested is largely transparent to travelers. The test requires no additional stops by vehicles or pedestrians as they enter or exit these ports.

There is no need for travelers to inquire about whether their entry was recorded. Similarly, when travelers exit the port, they should not attempt to stop and inquire about whether their exit was recorded.

In the case of travelers entering the United States as pedestrians, the RFID technology will be used to more quickly retrieve information from Department of Homeland Security (DHS) databases that CBP Officers customarily use in the inspection process. This capability will be extended to vehicular traffic in the next stage of the test.

Should a traveler with an RFID-enabled Form I-94A cross the border at other than a test location, there will not be an electronic record of that crossing.

Travelers must note that the RFID-enabled Form I-94A issued during this test is not a replacement for either a valid passport or valid nonimmigrant visa if either of these documents is required at the time of application for admission to the United States.

This test does not impact procedures required by the governments of Canada or Mexico, and travelers should continue to respect those procedures prescribed by ports of entry in Canada and Mexico.

Why is RFID Technology Being Tested at Land Borders by US-VISIT?

The US-VISIT Program is a continuum of security measures that collect biometric and biographic information from travelers at U.S. visa-issuing posts around the world, and upon their arrival in and departure from U.S. air, sea and land ports.

RFID technology builds on the current technologies and processes of the US-VISIT Program that contribute to achieving an integrated biometric entry-exit system.

RFID technology tags are tamper-proof and difficult to counterfeit, with security features to prevent information from being used incorrectly.

- The tag contains a unique number, no personal information.
- RFID tags and readers are regulated and their safety is certified by the Federal Communications Commission.

A successful test will allow for the integration of RFID technology with current capabilities at land borders to link traveler data to vehicle entry-exit data. It will:

- Provide better information on border crossing activities;
- Build the foundation for more robust recording of arrival and departure data; and
- Facilitate traveler processing by confirming traveler identity and status.

While the impact of any construction and maintenance activities related to the test will be temporary and minor, US-VISIT is working closely with the appropriate state departments of transportation, as well as with local officials, to alleviate any traffic concerns that do occur. In addition, community outreach meetings are being held at the proof of concept locations – in the United States, Mexico and Canada – to ensure that those most effected are informed and provided an opportunity to raise any questions or concerns.

Privacy Protection

US-VISIT has strong protections in place to safeguard the privacy of our welcomed visitors. US-VISIT has published a Privacy Impact Assessment that many in the privacy advocacy community have praised as a model of transparency because it includes detailed information about the program, the technology and the strategies used to mitigate potential privacy risks. If you have privacy concerns or questions about the safekeeping of your personal information, please contact the US-VISIT privacy officer at usvisitprivacy@dhs.gov.

For More Information

Please visit our Web site at www.dhs.gov/us-visit, where you will find information about the US-VISIT Program. Using the Web site, we invite you to subscribe to a listserv that distributes e-mail updates on program developments.